

Form 7

Developing safe practices - guidelines for Church workers (paid and unpaid)



1. Initial considerations

For each activity or event, consider:

- whether or not the event / activity / contact is a 'one off'
- will it involve parents and carers
- what is the age range and level of ability of the children involved.

The next stage in the process is to undertake a risk assessment to plan how best to run the activity or event.

2. Working with children legislation

Ensure that all Church workers (paid and unpaid) who work with children hold a current Working With Children card. Where an exemption applies, ensure that National Police Clearance is provided (over 18 years), together with a **Form 2 Declaration** to minimise any opportunity for individuals to harm children.

Ensure that an up-to-date Working With Children check Database is kept at the parish. (**Form 15 Working with Children Compliance Guidelines refers**)

3. Recruiting for events / activities

Ensure that Church workers (paid and unpaid) who are in a position of trust with children are recruited, in line with diocesan **Form 4 Our Parish Safeguarding Children** Policy and Procedures. Sometimes, Church organisations may run one-off events where people such as parents / volunteers will help out or individuals will supply a service. In such situations, the adults involved should be asked to complete the **Form 2 Declaration**. Church workers should also have some form of agreement with individuals / organisations who are going to supply a service, or be involved in activities or events with children, stating that they will abide by the expected standards of behaviour and comply with the diocesan Safeguarding Children Policy. They may be given a copy of the **Form 6 Code of behaviour for all Church workers (paid and unpaid) working with children**.

4. Supervision

We recommend the following adult to child ratios as the minimum numbers to help keep children safe.

0 - 2 years	:	1 adult to 3 children
2 - 3 years	:	1 adult to 4 children
4 - 8 years	:	1 adult to 6 children
9 - 12 years	:	1 adult to 8 children
13 - 18 years	:	1 adult to 10 children

These ratios are recommendations. They are not statutory requirements.

5. Know the children

Have defined criteria for membership of the organisation/group. **(Form 12 Code of behaviour for children)**

Have a registration system for each child.

Keep a record on each child, including medical details, any special needs, emergency contact numbers, attendance and consent forms. **(Form 10 Parental consent)**

6. Know the worker

Display a work schedule so that everyone knows who is on duty.

Respond to any allegation or complaints made about workers. **(Form 3 Child concern referral)**

Provide supervision for workers, including opportunities for discussing concerns and training needs, an annual review to assess general performance and any changes required.

7. Other ways to make sure individuals do not get the opportunity to harm children

Try to use open plan venues / spaces, where individuals cannot take children away on their own and adults are in sight of other adults.

Maintain a culture of awareness amongst the adults and children present by ensuring everyone is clear about their roles and responsibilities, and people are encouraged to challenge and report any inappropriate conduct with children.

Inform children how to report concerns.

Make sure there is good supervision of staff and volunteers.

Make sure you take feedback and debrief after the event.

Where possible, teach the Protective Behaviours Program.

8. Health and safety

Good health and safety practices should be complied with. Consider following questions when planning an activity or event:

- is there appropriate supervision in place? (Activities should not take place if this is not possible.)
- does the venue meet health and safety standards?
- are fire precautions in place and checked regularly?
- do you have first aid supplies to deal with minor accidents? (It is also advisable that first aid training is provided.)
- do you have adequate and appropriate changing and toilet facilities with separate provision for boys and girls?
- is there adequate insurance to cover activities?
- are all trips away carefully planned, including adequate provision of safe transport?
- do you have appropriate and adequate sleeping arrangements for all overnight trips?

9. Parental consent

Form 10 Parental consent must be signed by parents or carers prior to children participating in an activity or event and the record of such permission is kept.

Provide a copy of the **Form 12 Code of behaviour** for children taking part in Church activities to parents and children.

10. Use of IT equipment

Ensure that children will not have unsupervised access to internet facilities while engaged in Church-related activities.

Ensure that photos will only be taken and / or published with parental consent and this consent will be recorded **Form 13 Images of children involved in Church-related activities.**

11. Trips away

Trips away which involve young people can be an extremely rewarding and fulfilling experience for adults and children / young people involved. However, doing this safely and in a way which safeguards all concerned requires careful planning and consideration. Listed below are a number of areas which should be considered in planning a trip away.

12. Considerations for planning trips away

Have you:

- identified the aim and outcomes of the program?
- followed the child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures?
- carried out a risk assessment?
- recruited and selected staff / volunteers (paid and unpaid) using safe practices procedures? **Form 4, Form 5 & Form 14**
- selected a key staff member who has overall responsibility for the trip?
- selected staff for the trip who are appropriately trained, qualified and vetted (if appropriate)?
- nominated a staff member who is responsible for first aid?
- ensured that you have adequate and gender-based supervision in line with the Safeguarding Policies and Procedures?
- appointed a contact person who has access to all information and contact details?
- checked your own insurance and ensured that you have coverage for all activities?
- checked that the transport has appropriate insurance, qualified drivers, and seatbelts?
- carried out an equipment safety check?
- checked the first aid kit?
- ensured there is a contingency plan?
- made provision for returning home early?
- allocated a budget and a contingency fund?

Have you checked out the locations and accommodation of the trip away to ensure they have:

- required Working With Children cards and are current
- appropriate safeguarding policy, practices and procedures in place
- recruitment procedures
- insurance cover
- appropriately trained and qualified staff
- changing areas for boys and girls (if required)
- disability access (if required)?

Have the young people / participants:

- been involved as much as possible in the planning of the trip
- agreed a behaviour contract, with consequences
- agreed boundaries around unstructured time
- been given information on appropriate clothing, and contact details for leaders
- consented to the trip away?

Have parents / carers:

- met with leaders and been informed of the program
- been given a copy of the parish Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- consented in writing (**Form 10 Parental consent**)
- given contact details, medical details, including allergies, illnesses, medications; and dietary requirements (**Form 10 Parental consent**)
- been given contact details of leaders and centre
- been given details for pick up and drop off of young people / participants
- been given a copy of **Form 12 Code of behavior for children taking part in church activities?**

Have staff:

- been trained on the Safeguarding Code of Behaviour and Child Protection Policy, on how to deal with a disclosure and in dealing with challenging behaviour
- been assigned responsibilities and scheduled for breaks
- been made aware of how to handle an emergency and made aware of who to contact in an emergency
- evaluated the program with young people
- nominated and notified the participants of the designated Safeguarding Officer?

If staying overnight, have you checked:

- if there is access to centre staff 24/7
- if there are appropriate sleeping arrangements for young people, ie separate provision for boys and girls and separate provision for leaders (within earshot of young people)
- centre's supervision and security
- all workers and volunteers have a current Working With Children card. No exemptions apply to overnight events.